

Economic Development, Transportation Port's Focus

Economic study shows Port of Morrow's role in the region's economy

Businesses at the Port of Morrow directly employ over 3,900 people, which generates over \$266 million in labor income, according to an economic impact study completed this summer for the port.

The study and the port's strategic business plan were completed by the FCS Group of Portland and Berger ABAM of Hood River. Both documents highlight the port's economic and fiscal impacts, evaluate demographics of the surrounding area, industries and services at the port, and the port's role regionally and statewide. The economic impact study looks at the port now, while the strategic plan provides a blueprint for projects and policies for the port's advancement over the next 20 years.

Both documents are available on the port's website: www.portofmorrow.com.

The port is a main point for distribution, export and value-added production of agricultural products including grains, root vegetables, cattle and dairy products that are primarily grown in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

Other industries served by the port include lumber, food processing, transportation, freight distribution, information, advanced communications, energy, waste management and recreation.

Since its establishment in 1959, the Port of Morrow has grown to be the state's second-largest port, the largest being the Port of Portland. The Port's close proximity to two interstate highways, Union Pacific Railroad main line and the Columbia River have been major factors in the port's growth.

The Port of Morrow continues to expand as evidenced by new construction projects including expansions by ConAgra-Lamb Weston, Columbia River Processing, and new data centers. These three private capital investments total



Wind turbine blades are being stored at the Port of Morrow's East Beach Industrial park awaiting shipment for turbine construction in southeast Washington.

Photos courtesy of Port of Morrow

\$386 million and are supported by \$66.8 million in public infrastructure investments at the Port of Morrow. About \$48.3 million in local and state tax revenue is generated with federal tax revenue totaling \$66.2 million.

According to the study, port-related businesses accounted for \$1.6 billion in annual output in 2011, which is an 88 percent increase from \$850 million in 2006.

Efforts by the port, with local and state governments, are attracting new opportunities for "living wage" jobs. Business Oregon defines living wage as at least the Morrow County average covered payroll level of \$39,404. Port tenants making private capital investments are hiring employees with the majority to be paid at or above the median wage rate.

Morrow County income levels have been increasing over the past decade despite two national economic recessions. Median household income was about \$46,110 in 2010. ■

– Contributed by Anna Aylett, Port of Morrow



Track is installed at a new rail switch along Industrial Way at the Port of Morrow in early December 2013.